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## **Two Illegal Immigrants from New York Arrested Trying to Fraudulently Obtain New Mexico Driver's Licenses**

**SANTA FE** – Two illegal immigrants from New York who responded to a newspaper advertisement to obtain a New Mexico driver's licenses and then paid \$1,500 each were arrested Tuesday in Albuquerque on charges of trying to fraudulently obtain those licenses.

Manuel Chimbo-Pando, 30, of Ecuador and Carlos Turcios, 29, of El Salvador told State Police and tax fraud investigators that they responded to a New York newspaper advertisement to obtain New Mexico driver's licenses, according to a criminal complaint.

Both men said they called a contact number on the advertisement and paid \$1,500 into a Wells Fargo bank account, the complaint said. The crime ring handlers then provided the men with fraudulently documents, including false residential lease agreements, to obtain New Mexico driver's licenses.

Chimbo-Pando and Turcios also told investigators that they do not live in New Mexico, but they live and work in New York, according to the criminal complaint.

This is not the first time that a criminal ring has used newspaper advertisements promising New Mexico driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. A Polish newspaper in Chicago, a Spanish newspaper in New York and a Chinese newspaper in New York have also published similar advertisements.

This case comes on the heels of another case where two illegal foreign nationals, one of whom is part of a driver's license crime syndicate, were arrested for fraudulently applying for a New Mexico driver license on Friday in Farmington.

Jose Dolores Flores-Bonilla, a Mexican National, allegedly provided fraudulent documents in an attempt to obtain a New Mexico driver's license. Ivan Jose Gonzales, from El Salvador, allegedly drove Flores-Bonilla from Albuquerque to Farmington in an effort to obtain the driver's license.

Flores-Bonilla, 31, a resident of Georgia, was promised a New Mexico driver's license for \$2,500 by individuals connected to a crime ring that is accused of obtaining New Mexico driver's licenses for 40 undocumented immigrants living out of state, according to an investigation conducted by the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department's tax fraud agents.

Flores-Bonilla reportedly paid \$500 advance and was driven, by a yet to be identified individual, from Georgia to Albuquerque. Gonzales, a resident of Los Lunas, then drove Flores-Bonilla to Farmington to get the driver's license. Both men were arrested outside the Farmington MVD office by the State Police after they attempted to obtain the driver's license for Flores-Bonilla.

Flores-Bonilla was supposed to pay \$2,000 to his handlers once he received a New Mexico driver's license.

The Department's Tax Fraud Investigations Division also uncovered that the crime ring has been operating in New Mexico for the past one-and-a-half years by using fake residential addresses and PO Boxes in the Albuquerque, Belen, Los Lunas and Rio Rancho areas. The ring also used fraudulent residential documents to obtain driver licenses to 40 undocumented immigrants from Ecuador, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay.

The Department is in the process of canceling the driver licenses fraudulently obtained by the 40 individuals.

Flores-Bonilla and Gonzales were booked into the San Juan County Detention Center and later taken into custody by the immigration officials.

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